

Afterschool Snacks in the National School Lunch Program

1. What are “Afterschool Snacks”?

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) now offers cash reimbursement to help schools serve snacks to children after their regular school day ends. Afterschool snacks give children a nutritional boost and draw them into supervised activities that are safe, fun and filled with learning opportunities.

2. How can children benefit from the snack service?

Afterschool snacks help ensure that children receive the nutrition they need to learn, play and grow. Organized, structured, and supervised programs that provide snacks allow children to think and behave better, and help them make the grade!

3. Is my afterschool care program eligible?

In order for a site to participate, your school district must run the NSLP. Additionally the afterschool care program must provide children with regularly scheduled educational or enrichment activities in a supervised environment. Contact your State education agency for further information regarding program eligibility.

4. What type of snacks must be served in my program?

In order to be reimbursed, the snacks must contain at least two different components of the following four: a serving of fluid milk; a serving of meat or meat alternate; a serving of vegetable(s) or fruit(s) or full strength vegetable or fruit juice; a serving of whole grain or enriched bread and/or cereal.

5. How much money will my school get for serving snacks?

Snacks served in afterschool care programs that are “area eligible” (see Question 6) will be reimbursed at the free rate, regardless of an individual student’s eligibility for free or reduced price lunches. Snacks served in afterschool care programs that are not area eligible will be reimbursed at the free, reduced price and paid rate depending on each individual’s eligibility for free or reduced price meals. The reimbursement rates are adjusted annually. For the most recent list of reimbursement rates visit USDA’s Afterschool Snack website at www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Afterschool/default.htm. The rates of reimbursement for Alaska and Hawaii are higher.

6. How is “area eligible” defined?

An afterschool care program site is “area eligible” if it is located at a school or in the attendance area of a school where at least 50 percent of the enrolled children are eligible for free or reduced price meals. For example, if a high school with less than 50 percent free or reduced price school enrollment is located in the attendance area of a middle school that has at least 50 percent or more of the enrolled children eligible for free or reduced price meals, then the afterschool care program located in the school area would be area eligible.

7. If my site is not area eligible, must I take applications for individual students to determine whether they are eligible for free or reduced price benefits?

Since your school district is already participating in the NSLP, it will have free and reduced price applications on file. The eligibility determinations for those applications would apply for both the lunch and snack service under the NSLP. If an approved free or reduced price application is not on file, the school district will earn the paid rate of reimbursement for snacks served to that student unless the student makes and application and is approved for free or reduced price benefits.

8. How do I apply for afterschool snacks?

Contact the school food service director in your school district. You may also want to contact your State education agency for more information. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service home page at www.fns.usda.gov/fncs has a list of State Agencies.

9. When do the reimbursements begin?

As soon as the State agency approves our application, reimbursement will be earned for snacks served. Your program may also be eligible for retroactive reimbursements if you met snack program requirements and maintained accurate records of the snacks served back to October 1, 2001. Contact your school food service director (and State agency) to determine if you are eligible to receive retroactive reimbursements.

10. What records must be maintained?

Your school food service staff will provide you with specific information on the reporting and recordkeeping requirements. You will need to maintain a roster or sign-in sheet for participating children. Additionally, if you are area eligible, you must record and report the number of snacks served each day by category of reimbursement (i.e., whether they are served free, at a reduced price or paid). You will also be required to maintain documentation of compliance with the meal pattern.

11. If I am not eligible under NSLP, what can I do?

If you are not eligible under the requirements for the NSLP, you may still qualify for snack reimbursement under the Child and Adult Care Food Program. To find out, contact your CNP specialist.

12. Who administers the program?

The NSLP is administered on the Federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Within individual States, the program is administered by a State Agency, in most cases through offices in the State Department of Education. At the local level, the program is administered by the school/school district.